

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means

From: Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare

RE: Support for \$24.8m for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)

Chairs Steiner-Hayward, Johnson, and Rayfield, members of the committee,

My name is Derald Walker, and I am the Chief Executive Officer at Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare, which is a comprehensive community-based behavioral health organization in the Portland Metro area. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, or CCBHCs. Cascadia has been a CCBHC since Oregon adopted the model in 2017.

The CCBHC program offers a generous four to one Federal to State Medicaid match, meaning that our state's investment in this program will bring tens of millions more dollars into Oregon to address critical health needs for our citizens. Congress has demonstrated its commitment to the program by extending federal funding through September of 2023 as part of the COVID-19 relief package which was passed this past December. Your emergency board subsequently kept us afloat by providing the state match through June of this year. It is now up to you to provide the \$25 million in needed match funding to enable our State to benefit from this valuable program going forward.

Cascadia's mission is to provide integrated, whole health care for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness and behavioral health concerns. For mental health and recovery services to be most effective, we need to address concerns that affect not just the mind but the entire body. The CCBHC program has enabled us to bring primary care more directly to our clients, and provides coordinated integrated care to address this need.

The pandemic has made it clear how necessary this work is. The CCBHC program enabled Cascadia, as a behavioral health provider with integrated primary care, to have the capacity and ability to offer vaccinations for those we serve, many of whom would not otherwise interact with our primary healthcare system.

We have seen great outcomes as a result of this work. For example:

- Among a set of 900 clients who received CCBHC programming, we found an 18% reduction in emergency department utilization and a 23% reduction in medical admissions.

Our records reflect that, of those we serve, over 80% had not seen a primary care physician in two and half years and many, for much longer if ever. Once we provide them the primary care that they have been missing, most want to continue receiving these services. Over 70% in fact!

To put this into further context, take the example of Sam, an individual enrolled in our behavioral health services who has schizophrenia, depression and anxiety. He has historically

declined engagement in primary care services as a result of his mental health symptoms. Sam was developing a serious bacterial infection and was enrolled in our integrated primary care program made available by CCBHC funding. The case manager easily and seamlessly connect Sam with our medical team and set up a telehealth appointment, which he agreed to participate in in large part due to his sense of safety he had develop with Cascadia. Sam's infection was addressed and he agreed to enroll in Cascadia's primary care program so that his long-term health needs could better be met.

The CCBHC program provides real measurable, and documented outcomes that prove that this care saves lives of one of our most vulnerable communities. By providing the state match, Oregonians will benefit from this incredibly important humanitarian investments. I urge you to please support this investment and the CCBHC legislation, HB 3123.

Thank you,

Derald Walker
President and CEO, Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare